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## A Quiet Departure at CIA

**B**obby Ray Inman was always a reluctant deputy. As head of the National Security Agency when the Reagan Administration took power, he made no secret of his lack of interest in the No. 2 job at the Central Intelligence Agency. He changed his mind and accepted only after a personal appeal from the President himself.

Last week President Reagan accepted Inman's resignation as CIA deputy director "with deep regret." It was clear that the four-star admiral—the first major defector from the Reagan Administration's national-security ranks—had no regrets about leaving the CIA's bridge. He insisted that his resignation, which will take effect as soon as a successor is named, was for personal reasons, suggesting that, at 51, with one son in college and a second in prep school, it was time to seek six-figure comfort in the private sector. But sources close to Inman say he was increasingly disenchanted with Administration plans for the CIA and was feeling increasingly frustrated in a professional relationship with CIA director William J. Casey that was never warm and was frequently frigid.

**No Stomping:** Much of Inman's displeasure centers on what he calls "petty bureaucratic intrigue," including the occasional leaking of intelligence secrets for political effect. A prime example occurred when the White House confirmed the existence of U.S. covert operations against Nicaragua, a deliberate leak designed to show the President taking a hard-line stand against the Sandinista government. "That blew Inman's mind," says a source close to him. He was also appalled by the Administration's obsession with covert operations—including both those he believed should be overt

and those he viewed as reckless adventures—and angered by the time and energy he spent quashing them. According to one friend, Inman explained that he was quitting now "because I don't want to go out of here stomping my feet."

He had also made no secret of his dismay at plans to remove many of the prohibitions imposed by the Carter Administration on domestic spying by the CIA, although he subsequently endorsed a Presidential order permitting some covert CIA activities in this country. He is on record as opposing a proposal to consolidate CIA and FBI counterintelligence operations in a single new agency. "The main problems of the intelligence community," he says, "were ones of resources and not of organization."



But while Inman has occasionally bucked the Reagan Administration's hard-liners, he has more often abided by the party line. On the most fundamental issue of all—the size of the intelligence budget—he was wholly in tune with the Administration. He has supported government clearance of technological-research reports that might prove useful to the Soviet Union, and he has endorsed the exemption of the CIA from the Federal Freedom of Information Act. He has also supported the reclassification of once secret government documents and mandatory lie-detector tests for staff throughout the national-security apparatus. "I have always considered myself a conservative," he says.

Reagan is likely to miss Inman most on Capitol Hill. At his confirmation, one senator said that "if there ever was unanimous consent and enthusiasm, this is it"—and in his fourteen months in office, Inman has done nothing to diminish that affection.

"Casey mumbles and shoots the bull, while Inman is a straight shooter," says a source in the intelligence community. "Now the Reagan Administration has lost its credibility. They can't rush Bobby Ray over to cool the waters." Indiana Republican Richard Lugar, a key member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, was miffed that the President sat on Inman's resignation for a month without informing legislators, and demanded that Congress be consulted before a replacement is named. "He's been our man ... in a way," Lugar said. "Who are we going to call? Who has our trust?"

**Candor:** Inman's credibility in Congress may have played a significant part in his decision to resign. According to some sources, his habitual candor on the Hill tended to freeze him out of White House deliberations. The word around the White House, says one, was, "Don't tell Inman until you want the Hill to know." But the reasons for the admiral's disaffection probably run much deeper. Inman may have accepted the deputy's role at CIA with the hope that Casey's tenure would be short and that he would be his successor, but recently it seemed unlikely that Inman would be considered for the job. His relationship with Casey had steadily deteriorated—at one point, Inman threatened to resign rather than go along with the Reagan Administration's domestic-spying plans.

Still, given the high marks that Inman has received for his performance, few in the intelligence community would be surprised if he returns to a top national-security job in some future Administration. "I'm not going to make any Shermannesque statement,"